

Final Report: Rhode Island Child and Family Services Review Executive Summary

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Rhode Island. The CFSR assesses State performance on seven child welfare outcomes pertaining to children's safety, permanency, and well being and on seven systemic factors related to the State's capacity to achieve positive outcomes for children and families. The Rhode Island CFSR was conducted the week of March 8, 2004. The period under review was from October 1, 2002 to March 8, 2004. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides State child welfare data for the years 1999 through 2002;
- Reviews of 49 cases at three sites in the State (North Kingstown, Pawtucket, and Providence County).
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, a Tribal representative, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

The results of the Rhode Island CFSR indicate that the State is not in substantial conformity with the seven child welfare outcomes assessed through the CFSR or six of the seven systemic factors. A key issue that affected the rating of many systemic factors was the lack of sufficient attention to cases served by the child welfare agency involving children in the juvenile justice system. Although the CFSR determined that DCYF is making concerted efforts to improve this situation, stakeholders reported that many cases involving juvenile justice children still do not have case plans and are not subjected to administrative reviews and permanency hearings on an ongoing consistent basis. Another issue that affected systemic factor ratings was the lack of collaboration between the courts and the agency. Although the onsite CFSR found that DCYF is implementing practices to improve this relationship, stakeholders perceived the lack of a positive collaborative relationship as having a negative affect on the ability of the State either to achieve permanency for children in a timely manner or to ensure children's safety.

With regard to the outcomes, the areas of greatest concern pertain to Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations), and Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs).

Permanency Outcome 1 was determined to be substantially achieved in only 42.3 percent of the foster care cases reviewed during the CFSR. Key findings were that DCYF is not consistent in its efforts to (1) prevent re-entry into foster care, (2) ensure children's placement stability while in foster care, (3) establish appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner, and (4) achieve children's permanency goals in a timely manner.

Well-Being Outcome 1 was determined to be substantially achieved in only 18.4 percent of the cases reviewed. Each indicator for this outcome was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. In general, ratings for the indicators did not differ between foster care and in-home services cases. Key findings were that DCYF does not make concerted efforts to meet the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents; involve children and parents in the case planning process; or establish face-to-face contact with children and parents with sufficient frequency to ensure children's safety and well-being.

Concerns also were identified with regard to Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate). Reviewers found that in several cases there was obvious risk of harm to children remaining in their own homes and yet services were not provided to either the children or the parents. Some stakeholders attributed this in part to a commonly accepted state practice of permitting parents to plead to dependency rather than to abuse or neglect. Under this plea, DCYF does not have the same authority to require parents to engage in services that would reduce the risk of further maltreatment and address underlying familial issues.

With regard to the seven systemic factors, the CFSR determined that the State was in substantial conformity with the factor of Statewide Information System. The State did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Case Review System, Quality Assurance System, Training, Service Array, Agency Responsiveness to the Community, and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. With regard to the Case Review System, the CFSR found that although DCYF had established policies and procedures intended to attain permanency in a timely manner, these policies and procedures were not being implemented in a consistent manner, particularly for youth who enter foster care through the juvenile justice system. The CFSR found that DCYF has only recently made concerted efforts to ensure that case plans are developed, case reviews are held, and permanency hearings are convened for these youth.

Stakeholders interviewed during the onsite CFSR identified the following concerns pertaining to the ability of the agency to achieve permanency for children in a timely manner: (1) some judges do not follow the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act and do not adhere to 12-month reviews on a consistent basis; (2) there is extensive variation across courtrooms with regard to the quality of the permanency hearing; and (3) recommendations made through the Administrative Review process are not taken into consideration by the courts or by the agency.

Key concerns related to other systemic factors included the following: (1) there are gaps in critical services that impact children's safety, permanency, and well-being, (2) DCYF does not mandate training for Juvenile Probation workers (who are responsible for delivering services under titles IV-B and IV-E), who consequently rarely attend training; (3) DCYF does not have a comprehensive quality assurance system; and (4) DCYF efforts to recruit/retain foster homes that reflect the ethnic diversity of the foster care population vary in intensity across the State.

The overall findings with regard to the State's performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance relative to the national standards and table 4 provides information pertaining to the State's substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR. A summary of major findings is presented below.

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two indicators. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to whether children experience a recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment (item 2).

Rhode Island did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 77.5 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.
- The State did not meet the national standard for (1) the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period, or (2) the percentage of children experiencing maltreatment by a foster care provider.

A key CFSR finding with regard to this outcome is that DCYF consistently initiates investigations of maltreatment and establishes face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim in accordance with State-established timeframes. However, with respect to repeat maltreatment, both the State Data Profile and case reviews indicate that DCYF is not consistent in preventing the recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period. Maltreatment recurred within a 6-month period in 7 (58%) of the 12 cases in which there was at least 1 substantiated maltreatment report during the period under review.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate.

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two indicators. One indicator (item 3) addresses the child welfare agency's efforts to prevent the removal of children from their homes by providing services to the families that ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other indicator (item 4) pertains to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in reducing risk of harm to children.

Rhode Island did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 65.9 percent of the applicable cases reviewed, which does not meet the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.

A key concern identified during the CFSR pertained to an insufficient assessment of underlying and ongoing risk. In addition, case reviewers identified several cases in which there was risk of harm to the children in the home but the services needed to address the risk issues were not provided to either the children or the parents.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

There are six indicators incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in preventing foster care re-entry (item 5), ensuring placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the child welfare agency's efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9), or whether children who have "other planned living arrangements" as a case goal are in stable placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Rhode Island did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 42.3 percent of the 26 foster care cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for fiscal year (FY) 2002, the State did not meet the national standards for (1) the percentage of children who were re-entering foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode, (2) the percentage of children reunified who were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care, or (3) the percentage of children in foster care for less than 12 months and who experienced no more than 2 placements.

The State did meet the national standard for the percentage of children adopted in FY 2002 who achieved a finalized adoption within 24 months of entry into foster care. However, CFSR case reviewers determined that in 5 of the 6 cases in which adoption was the child's permanency goal, the agency had not made concerted efforts to achieve the adoption in a timely manner.

A key CFSR finding is that all indicators for Permanency Outcome 1 were rated as Areas Needing Improvement. Case reviewers determined that DCYF was not consistent in its efforts to (1) prevent re-entry into foster care (item 5), (2) ensure children's placement stability while in foster care (item 6), (3) establish appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner (item 7), or (4) achieve children's permanency goals in a timely manner (items 8, 9, and 10).

Information from the case reviews and stakeholder interviews identified the following as potential barriers to attaining permanency and stability for children in foster care: (1) reunification without adequate planning and preparation; (2) a lack of post-reunification supports; (3) a lack of sufficient placement resources; (4) a reliance on emergency shelter care, which results in multiple, short-term placements even for young children; and (5) the maintenance of inappropriate permanency goals for long periods of time due in part to the reluctance on the part of the agency and the courts to explore the range of permanency options.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six indicators that assess the child welfare agency's performance with regard to (1) placing children in foster care in close proximity to their parents and relatives (item 11), (2) placing siblings together (item 12), (3) ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13), (4) preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14), (5) seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15), and (6) promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Rhode Island did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 57.7 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

CFSR findings indicate that DCYF makes concerted efforts to place children in close proximity to their families. However, the findings also indicate that DCYF does not make sufficient efforts to ensure that (1) there are sufficient placement resources to be able to place siblings together in foster care (2) visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care is of sufficient frequency, (3) children's connections to their families are preserved, (4) relatives are sought as placement resources, or (5) the parent-

child relationship is supported or enhanced. A key concern identified in the case reviews and stakeholder interviews pertains to a lack of consistent effort on the part of the agency to involve fathers in visitation.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Well-Being Outcome 1 incorporates four indicators. One pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents are assessed and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second indicator examines the child welfare agency's efforts to actively involve parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining indicators examine the frequency and quality of caseworker's contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and with the children's parents (item 20).

Rhode Island did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 18.4 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

A key CFSR finding is that all indicators for Well-Being Outcome 1 were rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Case reviews found that DCYF was not consistent in its efforts to (1) assess children and families for services and provide necessary services (item 17), (2) involve parents and children in the case-planning process (item 18), and (3) establish sufficient face-to-face contact between DCYF caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads (items 19 and 20). Case reviews also found that DCYF is not consistent in its efforts to establish contact with fathers, assess the service needs of fathers, or engage fathers in case planning.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

There is only one indicator for Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to address and meet the educational needs of children in both foster care and in-home services cases (item 21).

Rhode Island did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. This determination is based on the finding that the outcome was achieved in 73.3 percent of the cases reviewed, which does not meet the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

A key CFSR finding was that DCYF is not consistent in its efforts to ensure that children's educational needs are addressed, particularly children whose families receive services while the children remain in their own homes. This outcome was substantially achieved in 88 percent of the foster care cases compared to only 55 percent of the in-home services cases.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

This outcome incorporates two indicators that assess the child welfare agency's efforts to meet children's physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs.

Rhode Island did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 60.4 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

The CFSR found that DCYF was not consistent in its effort to meet children's physical and mental health needs. A particular concern pertained to the mental health needs of children in the in-home services cases. In many of those cases, reviewers determined that the agency did not respond appropriately in situations in which presenting or underlying issues warranted a mental health assessment and/or mental health services.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating a Statewide information system that can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care (item 24).

Rhode Island is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. According to the Statewide Assessment, Rhode Island has an operational SACWIS system called RICHIST, that has the necessary functionality to meet Federal regulations. Stakeholders commenting on RICHIST were in agreement that the system can track the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals of children in foster care, and that the system continues to track children after they have been returned home in those situations in which DCYF retains custody of the child. Most stakeholders also expressed the opinion that information in RICHIST generally is accurate, timely, and accessible, although they noted that data entry is time-consuming. However, stakeholders reported that information on juvenile justice and mental health cases tends to be less accurate than information on child welfare cases.

Case Review System

Five indicators are used to assess the State's performance with regard to the systemic factor of Case Review System. The indicators examine the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), the implementation of procedures to seek termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the timeframes established in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 28), and the notification and inclusion of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers in case reviews and hearings (item 29).

The State of Rhode Island is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The CFSR determined that:

- Case plans are not developed jointly with the child's parent on a consistent basis.
- DCYF is not consistent with regard to conducting a case review for all children in foster care at least once every 6 months, particularly children who enter foster care through the juvenile justice system.
- Permanency hearings are not consistently conducted every 12 months for children in who enter foster care through the juvenile justice system, although the State is in the process of addressing this concern.
- Although the State has established a process for TPR in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, this process is not implemented on a consistent basis by either DCYF or the courts.

Despite these concerns the CFSR also found that there is a process in place for foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers to be notified of, and to have an opportunity to be heard in, hearings and reviews.

Quality Assurance System

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System is based on whether the State has developed standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care (item 30), and whether the State is operating a Statewide quality assurance system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement (item 31).

Rhode Island is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The CFSR determined that although the State has established standards for foster parents and foster care providers to protect the health and safety of children in care, the State does not have a comprehensive Quality Assurance System that measures program strengths and areas needing improvement on a Statewide basis.

Training

The systemic factor of Training incorporates an assessment of the State's new caseworker training program (item 32), ongoing training for child welfare agency staff (item 33), and training for foster and adoptive parents (item 34).

Rhode Island did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. The CFSR determined that although the State provides excellent and comprehensive training to caseworkers in the Family Services Unit, they do not mandate the same training for Juvenile Probation workers, who also are responsible for delivering services under titles IV-B and IV-E. Stakeholders noted that because this training is not mandated for Juvenile Probation workers, very few of them participate. With regard to ongoing training, stakeholders reported that although workers are required to participate in 20 hours of ongoing training annually, this requirement is not enforced and many workers do not attend because of lack of time due to their heavy workloads. Stakeholders also reported that there is no ongoing training for supervisors and expressed concern regarding the absence of an ongoing training requirement for foster and pre-adoptive parents.

Service Array

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array addresses three questions: (1) Does the State have in place an array of services to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? (2) Are these services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? (3) Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Rhode Island did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The CFSR determined that although the State has a wide array of services in place, there are gaps in critical service areas that impact safety, permanency and well-being of children. Critical gaps in the service array are foster homes, foster parent support services, substance abuse services for both youth and adults, and in-home/post-reunification support services. In addition, stakeholders commented that necessary services are not accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions in the State and for those communities where services are available, access may be limited by long waiting lists. Finally, the CFSR determined that although the State is capable of individualizing services to meet the unique needs of some children and families, particularly those with high-end needs, this effort is not consistent for all children and families.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of the State's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the CFSP (items 38 and 39), and the extent to which the State coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or federally-assisted programs serving the same population (item 40).

Rhode Island is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The CFSR determined that DCYF does not make concerted efforts, particularly at the local levels, to coordinate services with other Federal or Federally funded programs, or sufficient efforts to engage some key external and internal stakeholders in developing the CFSP or in preparing the annual CFSP progress reports. The agency's level of collaboration with the Courts is of particular concern. Stakeholders comments indicate that there are long-standing tensions between the court and DCYF that both sides recognize. They also noted that although DCYF currently is implementing efforts to address this problem, full collaboration remains a challenge.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State's standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State's compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the State's efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State's activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children.

Rhode Island is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor pertaining to Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The CFSR determined that efforts to ensure the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed vary in intensity across the State. They indicated that there are difficulties recruiting foster homes to meet the placement needs of children, particularly older African American males and Native American children. Furthermore, it was noted that although there is a process in place for the use of cross-jurisdictional resources for adoption, it is not an effective process for facilitating permanency for waiting children. The CFSR found that overall efforts in this area may be hindered by caseworkers' reluctance to make inter-jurisdictional placements.

Despite these concerns, the CFSR determined that Rhode Island has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards and that these standards are equally applied to relative,

non-relative, kinship care, and adoptive homes. In addition, the CFSR found that the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements.

Table 1: Rhode Island CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings		
	<i>In Substantial Conformity?</i>	<i>Percent Substantially Achieved*</i>	<i>Met National Standards?</i>	<i>Rating**</i>	<i>Percent Strength</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>
Safety Outcome 1-Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	77.5	No			
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				Strength	87	
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				ANI	82	No
Safety Outcome 2 - Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	65.9				
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				ANI	79	
Item 4: Risk of harm				ANI	67	
Permanency Outcome 1- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	42.3	Met 1, did not meet 3			
Item 5: Foster care re-entry				ANI	89	No
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				ANI	69	No
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	73	
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship and placement with relatives				ANI	65	No
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	17	Yes
Item 10: Other planned living arrangement				ANI	33	
Permanency Outcome 2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	57.7				
Item 11: Proximity of placement				Strength	96	
Item 12: Placement with siblings				ANI	75	
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	78	
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	77	
Item 15: Relative placement				ANI	71	
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	73	

*90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI).

Table 2: Rhode Island CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well Being Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Item Ratings			
	<i>In Substantial Conformity?</i>	<i>Percent Substantially Achieved*</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>	<i>Rating**</i>	<i>Percent Strength</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>
Well Being Outcome 1 - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs	No	18.4				
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents				ANI	31	
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning				ANI	39	
Item 19: Worker visits with child				ANI	61	
Item 20: Worker visits with parents				ANI	34	
Well Being Outcome 2 - Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	73.3				
Item 21: Educational needs of child				ANI	73	
Well Being Outcome 3 - Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	No	60.4				
Item 22: Physical health of child				ANI	77	
Item 23: Mental health of child				ANI	61	

*90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

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Table 3: Rhode Island Performance on the Six Outcome Measures for which National Standards have been established

Outcome Measure	National Standard	Rhode Island Data FY 2002
Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report in the first 6 months of CY 2002, what percent were victims of another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?	6.1% or less	10.2%
Of all children who were in foster care in the first 9 months of CY 2002, what percent experienced maltreatment from foster parents or facility staff members?	0.57% or less	1.1%
Of all children who entered foster care in FY 2002, what percent were re-entering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode?	8.6% or less	19.2%
Of all children reunified from foster care in FY 2002, what percent were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care?	76.2% or more	66.2%
Of all children who were adopted from foster care in FY 2002, what percent were adopted within 24 months of their entry into foster care?	32.0% or more	45.0%
Of all children in foster care during FY 2002 for less than 12 months, what percent experienced no more than 2 placement settings?	86.7% or more	82.3%

Table 4: Rhode Island CFSR Ratings for the Seven Systemic Factors

Systemic Factors	In Substantial Conformity?*	Rating**
IV. Statewide Information System	Yes (4)	
Item 24: System can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals of children in foster care		Strength
V. Case Review System	No (2)	
Item 25: Process for developing a case plan and for joint case planning with parents		ANI
Item 26: Process for 6-month case reviews		ANI
Item 27: Process for 12-month permanency hearings		ANI
Item 28: Process for seeking TPR in accordance with ASFA		ANI
Item 29: Process for notifying caregivers of reviews and hearings and for opportunity for them to be heard		Strength
VI. Quality Assurance System	No (2)	
Item 30: Standards to ensure quality services and ensure children's safety and health		Strength
Item 31: Identifiable QA system that evaluates the quality of services and improvements		ANI
VII. Training	No (2)	
Item 32: Provision of initial staff training		ANI
Item 33: Provision of ongoing staff training that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge.		ANI
Item 34: Provision of training for caregivers and adoptive parents that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge		ANI
VIII. Service Array	No (2)	
Item 35: Availability of array of critical services		ANI
Item 36: Accessibility of services across all jurisdictions		ANI
Item 37: Ability to individualize services to meet unique needs		ANI
IX. Agency Responsiveness to the Community	No (2)	
Item 38: Engages in ongoing consultation with critical stakeholders in developing the CFSP		ANI
Item 39: Develops annual progress reports in consultation with stakeholders		ANI
Item 40: Coordinates services with other Federal programs		ANI
X. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention	No (2)	
Item 41: Standards for foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 42: Standards are applied equally to all foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 43: Conducts necessary criminal background checks		Strength
Item 44: Diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect children's racial and ethnic diversity		ANI
Item 45: Uses cross-jurisdictional resources to find placements		ANI

*Systemic factors are rated on a scale from 1 to 4. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates "Not in Substantial Conformity." A rating of 3 or 4 indicates Substantial Conformity

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI).

FINAL REPORT RHODE ISLAND CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW

Introduction

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Rhode Island. The CFSR assesses State performance on seven child welfare outcomes pertaining to children's safety, permanency, and well being and on seven systemic factors related to the State's capacity to achieve positive outcomes for children and families. The Rhode Island CFSR was conducted the week of March 8, 2004. The period under review was from October 1, 2002 to March 8, 2004. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

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- Reviews of 49 cases at three sites in the State (North Kingstown, Pawtucket, and Providence County).
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, a Tribal representative, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

The key characteristics of the 49 cases reviewed are the following:

- Nineteen cases were reviewed in Providence County, 19 in Pawtucket, and 11 in North Kingstown.
- All 49 cases had been open cases at some time during the period under review.
- 26 cases were "foster care cases" (cases in which the State child welfare agency had care and placement responsibility and the child was in an out-of-home placement at some time during the period under review), and 23 were "in-home services cases" (cases in which families received services from the child welfare agency while children remained with their families and no child in the family was in out-of-home care during the period under review).
- Of the 26 foster care cases, 10 children (38%) were younger than age 10 at the start of the period under review; 4 children (15%) were at least 10 years old, but not yet 13 years old; and 12 children (46%) were 13 years of age or older at the start of the period under review.
- Of the 26 foster care cases, 16 children (62%) were male and 10 (38%) were female.
- Of the 49 cases reviewed, there were 26 cases (53%) in which all children in the family were White (non-Hispanic); 11 cases (22%) in which all children in the family were of 2 or more races/ethnicity (including one case where the child was of Native American

heritage); 7 cases (14%) in which all the children in the family were African-American (non-Hispanic); 3 cases (6%) in which all children in the family were Hispanic; 1 case (2%) in which all children in the family were Asian; and 1 case (2%) in which the racial/ethnic identity of the child was “undetermined.”

- Of the 49 cases reviewed, reviewers identified the following as the **primary** reason for the opening of a child welfare agency case:
 - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 19 cases (39%)
 - Child’s behavior – 9 cases (18%)
 - Substance abuse by parents – 6 cases (12%)
 - Child in juvenile justice system – 5 cases (10%)
 - Sexual abuse – 3 cases (6%)
 - Physical abuse – 1 case (2%)
 - Medical neglect – 1 case (2%)
 - Abandonment – 1 case (2%)
 - Domestic violence in the home – 1 case (2%)
 - Mental/physical health of the child– 1 case (2%)
 - Other – 2 cases (4%). One case was opened because the child’s parents were deceased and the agency took custody of the child. Another case was opened because the child ran away from another State due to allegations of physical abuse by her mother and came to live with her father in Rhode Island.
- Of the 49 cases reviewed, the most frequently cited of all reasons for children coming to the attention of the child welfare agency were the following:
 - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 28 cases (57% of all cases)
 - Substance abuse by parents – 17 cases (35% of cases)
 - Physical abuse – 15 cases (31% of cases)
 - Child’s behavior – 14 cases (29% of cases)
- In 17 (65%) of the 26 foster care cases, the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and remained in care during the entire period under review.

The first section of this report presents CFSR findings relevant to the State’s performance in achieving specific outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table presenting key findings, a discussion of the State’s status with regard to the outcome, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed. The second section of the report provides an assessment and discussion of the seven systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency’s ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.